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ABSTRACT

The U.S. has always had regional differences. Today the regions may be difficult to distinguish, but from 1800 to 1860, those lines clearly existed. While each region, North, South, and West, remained dedicated to the American Dream, each attempted to reach the dream in significantly different ways. This lesson, which revolves around an 1839 anti-railroad poster circulated in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, relates to the struggle to define the powers of the national and state governments. The lesson can be examined along with Article I, Section 8, on the powers of Congress and Article IV on states' rights. It correlates to the National History Standards and to the National Standards for Civics and Government. The lesson provides one primary source document, the anti-railroad poster, and the historical background on the gradual growth of U.S. regionalism. It presents diverse teaching activities, such as brainstorming, document analysis, research and discussion on propaganda, a geography exercise, role play, research and application on sectionalism, and predicting outcomes. (Contains a poster analysis worksheet.) (BT)

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National Archives and Records Administration

THE CONSTITUTION COMMUNITY

Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)

Anti-Railroad Propoganda Poster: The Growth of Regionalism, 1800-1860

By Kerry C. Kelly

SO 033 582

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The Constitution Community is a partnership between classroom teachers and education specialists from the National Archives and Records Administration. We are developing lessons and activities that address constitutional issues, correlate to national academic standards, and encourage the analysis of primary source documents. The lessons that have been developed are arranged according to historical era.

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Anti-railroad Propaganda Poster:

The Growth of Regionalism, 1800 - 1860

Constitutional Connection

This lesson relates to the struggle to define the powers of the national and state governments. It can be examined along with Article I, Section 8 , on the powers of Congress and Article IV on states' rights.

This lesson correlates to the National History Standards.

Era 4 -Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)

- **Standard 2A** -Demonstrate understanding of how the factory system and the transportation and market revolutions shaped regional patterns of economic development.

This lesson correlates to the National Standards for Civics and Government.

Standard III.C.1. -Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the proper relationship between the national government and the state and local governments.

Standard III.E.2. -Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the role of public opinion in American politics.

Cross-curricular Connections

Please share this exercise with your history, government, and art colleagues.

List of Documents

Poster circulated in Philadelphia in 1839 to discourage the coming of the railroad

Historical Background

Did you ever wonder why people from Chicago call carbonated water "pop" while New Yorkers call it "soda"? Or why Southerners tease Northerners for talking too fast, driving too fast, and even eating too fast? Well, the United States has always had regional differences. Today, the regions may be difficult to draw a line around, but from 1800 to 1860, those lines clearly existed. The United States was divided into three distinct regions: the North, the South, and the West. While each region remained dedicated to the "American Dream," each attempted to reach the dream in significantly different ways. The North realized her dreams with industry and commerce while the South continued to prosper with her plantations and subsistence farms. The Western frontier opened up to both commercial farms and manufacturing, showing a little bit of both her northern and southern heritage.

Regional differences deepened when the national government began expanding, meeting foreign entanglements and domestic trouble. The War of 1812 brought controversy to a head. The young country's armed forces were not equipped for a war, lacking both an able staff and an adequate number of enlisted men. The burden fell on the states, recruiting militia men and relying heavily on western frontiersmen. Not all states cooperated; the North was against the war, primarily for economic reasons. The war ended up stimulating economic change, spurring the production of manufactured goods, which the North eagerly provided. Factories sprang up across the North and an influx of immigrants satisfied the demand for labor.

The war exposed not only weaknesses in defense, but also in transportation. Modes and methods of transportation were totally inadequate. Generals moved troops slowly by carriages, or on foot, on poorly developed roads. President James Madison supported the idea of internal improvements, yet he vetoed an internal improvements bill, which would have provided for the construction of roads. He felt that roads and canals that would benefit local communities should be funded by the respective states and private enterprises. He did, however, approve monies for a National Road, solely on the grounds that it would benefit national defense. This road began in Maryland and stretched all the way to Ohio, joining the Northeast with the western frontier. An equally significant improvement was the completion of the Erie Canal, linking the Great Lakes with New York City and the Atlantic Ocean.

Sectionalism deepened as the manufacturers and commercial interests in the North became connected by transportation and trade with the West. Northern cities grew with increasing immigration and factory systems. Roads, canals, and railroads connected northern cities with each other and the West, where agriculture, mining, and the lumber industry were booming. The West no longer depended on the south-flowing Mississippi and Missouri Rivers; she was connected with the North in more ways than one. Railroads

and the telegraph would solidify the east-west relationship. The South was developing her own economy and culture, which were dominated by the plantation system and slavery. Merchants and manufacturers were less important than the slaves, slave owners, and nonslave owning farmers who produced her agricultural crops, especially "king cotton," and other raw materials for export.

Although the regions embraced independent lifestyles, characteristics, and economies, they depended on each other to survive. The West relied on Northern and Southern manpower and national support to protect and develop the land; the North bought her agricultural and raw materials from the South and West and in turn sold manufactured goods. The links keeping them together, they thought, would be technology and transportation. History tells us, however, that regionalism deepened as the national government enacted the Missouri Compromise and then the Kansas-Nebraska bill--two events where the debate over the addition of new states and territories and the issue of slavery came to a head. Examine the linked document to study community life during this time, the growing sectionalism in the young country, and the impact of national decisions.

Teaching Activities

Brainstorming

1. Ask students to make a list of the different modes and methods of transportation that they use. Ask them why people use transportation and why transportation is important. From their lists, instruct students to identify which modes of transportation were used in the 1800s. Utilizing various maps of our country during this time period, instruct students to determine the different modes of transportation used in the different regions and to account for the differences.

Document Analysis

2. Direct students to read the section in their text related to transportation developments of the 1830s and 40s and then complete a Poster Analysis Worksheet for the document provided. Lead a class discussion about the poster using the questions from the analysis sheet and some others, like the following: Does the point of view of the poster surprise you? According to the poster, who was in favor of the railroad? Compare the point of view of the poster with what you've read in your text books. What does the comparison reveal about the differences that sometimes exist between community, regional, and national goals?

Research and Discussion

3. Discuss the meaning of propaganda with the students. Ask them if the poster could be considered propaganda. Help the students to identify current forms of propaganda in their everyday lives. Ask them to identify a local issue that aroused intense interest in the community. Examples might include preserving land, locating an incinerator, building a

road, or moving a school. Using newspaper articles and editorials, students should research this issue, discuss it with their parents, interview people involved in the development, and then form their own opinions about the project. Instruct students to take a stand for or against the project and create a piece of propaganda to rally support for their viewpoints. Lead a class discussion on the responsibility of citizens to participate in their government. Tie the discussion back to the original document by using the following questions: What if the authors of the poster had been successful in preventing the railroad? How would this have changed regional development? In the 1830s, how did the interests of the poster's creators compare with those of their region and those of the nation? Today, how do your interests (as reflected in the student-created propaganda) compare with those of your region and those of the nation?

Geography Exercise

4. Distribute blank maps of the New York--Philadelphia metropolitan area and ask students to label the cities and modes of transportation that are mentioned in the poster. Ask students why they think this area was a target area for growth. Discuss with them the geographic, economic, and political factors that contribute to growth. Instruct students working in small groups to identify other megacities in the United States and account for their growth. Groups will also predict where the next megalopolis will be and why. (You may want to use different types of maps--political, physical, present, an 1850/1860s map, 1900 map, etc.)

Role Play

5. Instruct students to brainstorm a list of reasons for and against building the railroad in Philadelphia in the 1830s. Assign students roles in this debate and create a reenactment of a 1839 town meeting in Philadelphia. (Costumes, props, and all!) Possible student roles: mothers, business leaders, local government officials, unemployed workers, etc.

Research and Application

6. Explain to the students that sectionalism influenced important legislation during the mid-1800s. Remind students about the various reactions to the War of 1812. Divide students into three groups representing the North, South, and West. Instruct each group to use various sources to research the population, factories, miles of railroads, canals, roads, and raw materials in their section during the period 1830-1860. (An excellent resource is *Historical Statistics of the United States* , published by the Bureau of the Census.) Ask each group to compile their information on a wall chart. Lead a class discussion comparing and contrasting the three regions. Assign students to various pieces of legislation passed in the period 1830-1860 (Missouri Compromise, Pacific Railroad Act, Kansas-Nebraska Act, etc.) Instruct them to write an essay explaining how sectionalism influenced their particular legislation. Instead of an essay, another option would be to assign students a role of a person from a region and ask them to write a position paper or editorial on one or more of the pieces of legislation.

Predicting Outcomes

7. Instruct students to research current legislation related to transportation by searching the Senate Web site <www.senate.gov> and the House of Representatives <www.house.gov> Web site . Ask them to determine how that legislation might affect the region in which they live. Ask them to draw an image of daily life in their own region in the present and another one for the year 2025, assuming the passage of the legislation.

The document included in this project is from Record Group 30, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads. It is available online through the National Archives Information Locator (NAIL) database <http://www.nara.gov/nara/nail.html>, control number NWDNS-30-N-46-1957. NAIL is a searchable database that contains information about a wide variety of NARA holdings across the country. You can use NAIL to search record descriptions by keywords or topics and retrieve digital copies of selected textual documents, photographs, maps, and sound recordings related to thousands of topics.

This article was written by Kerry C. Kelly, a teacher at Hunterdon Central Regional High School in Flemington, NJ.

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Poster Analysis Worksheet

1. What are the main colors used in the poster?

_____

2. What symbols (if any) are used in the poster?

_____

3. If a symbol is used, is it

a. clear (easy to interpret)? _____
b. memorable? _____
c. dramatic? _____

4. Are the messages in the poster primarily visual, verbal, or both?

_____

5. Who do you think is the intended audience for the poster?

_____

6. What does the Government hope the audience will do?

_____

7. What Government purpose(s) is served by the poster?

_____

8. The most effective posters use symbols that are unusual, simple, and direct. Is this an effective poster?

_____

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MOTHERS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR CHILDREN!

ARTISANS, MECHANICS, CITIZENS!

When you leave your family in health, must you be hurried home to mourn a

DREADFUL CASUALITY!

PHILADELPHIANS, your RIGHTS are being invaded! regardless of your interests, or the LIVES OF YOUR LITTLE ONES. THE CAMDEN AND AMBOY, with the assistance of other companies without a Charter, and in VIOLATION OF LAW, as decreed by your Courts, are laying a

LOCOMOTIVE RAIL ROAD!

Through your most Beautiful Streets, to the RUIN of your TRADE, annihilation of your RIGHTS, and regardless of your PROSPERITY and COMFORT. Will you permit this? or do you consent to be a

SUBURB OF NEW YORK!!

Rails are now being laid on BROAD STREET to CONNECT the TRENTON RAIL ROAD with the WILMINGTON and BALTIMORE ROAD, under the pretence of constructing a City Passenger Railway from the Navy Yard to Fairmount!!! This is done under the auspices of the CAMDEN AND AMBOY MONOPOLY!

RALLY PEOPLE in the Majesty of your Strength and forbid THIS

OUTRAGE!

Poster Circulated in Philadelphia in 1839 to discourage the coming of the railroad.

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